

## Message Text

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TOSEC 292

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION AQABA FROM SECSTATE FEB 14

QUOTE UNCLAS STATE 034696

TOSEC 292

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT:PRESS REPORTAGE , FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14

FOR AMBASSADOR ANDERSON FROM S/PRS

NO. 23

NEWSPAPERS:

1. NYDAILY NEWS - CARTER - PAGE 2 WITH 2-COLUMN PIC HAK  
AND FAHMI EMBRACE AFTER SIGNING ECONOMIC ACCORD.

HEADLINE: QUOTE STILL IN BUSINESS END QUOTE SAYD HOPEFUL  
HENRY

JERUSALEM - HAK AFTER SOUNDING OUT EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT  
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AND SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD ABOUT POSSIBILITIES FOR A NEW

STEP TOWARD PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, BROUGHT BACK WORD TO ISRAEL TONIGHT THAT "WE ARE STILL IN BUSINESS".

BUT DESPITE PROFESSIONS OF OPTIMISM IN CAIRO, APPARENTLY NOTHING HAD BEEN DONE YET TO BRIDGE THE WIDE GAP BETWEEN EGYPT'S DEMANDS AND WHAT ISRAEL HAS BEEN WILLING TO OFFER FOR A SECOND STAGE DISENGAGEMENT IN THE SINAI.

HAK STILL APPEARED HOPEFUL OF BEING ABLE TO WORK OUT A DEAL FOR A FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL WHEN HE RETURNS TO THE ME ON A LONGER TRIP NEXT MONTH.

BUT A HIGH OFFICIAL ABOARD HAK'S PLANE ADMITTED THAT THE NEGOTIATION OF A NEW AGREEMENT BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL WOULD BE "A CLOSE ONE".

THE OFFICIAL ASSERTED THAT THE NEGOTIATION WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT THAT KISSINGER HAS YET UNDERTAKEN IN THE ME. ...

AMERICAN OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT WANTS -- AND NEEDS -- TO MAKE ANOTHER STEP TOWARD PEACE. BUT HE HAS NOT YET MADE ANY CONCESSIONS TO THE ISRAELI DEMAND FOR A PLEDGE OF NONBELLIGERENCY IN EXCHANGE FOR A FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.

BUT HAK WAS UNDERSTOOD TO BELIEVE THAT THE EGYPTIANS "MAY BE CONSIDERING SOME FLEXIBILITIES" THAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO REVEAL TO HIM THIS EARLY IN THE GAME.

BOTH EGYPT AND ISRAEL WILL HAVE TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE THAN THEY HAVE BEEN IN ORDER TO REACH ANY AGREEMENT.

SO FAR, THE ISRAELIS HAVE OFFERED TO PULL BACK 20 TO 30 MILES FROM THEIR PRESENT LINES IN EXCHANGE FOR TANGIBLE POLITICAL CONCESSIONS FROM EGYPT. PRIME MINISTER YITZHAK RABIN HAS SAID THEY WOULD PULL BACK FURTHER, GIVING UP THE STRATEGIC MILTA AND GIDI PASSES AND THE OIL FIELDS AT ABU RUDIES, IN EXCHANGE FOR A FORMAL EGYPTIAN COMMITMENT TO END ALL BELLIGERENT ACTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL.

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THE EGYPTIANS SAY THAT IN ORDER TO HAVE ANY MEANING, THE WITHDRAWAL MUST INCLUDE THE STRATEGIC MOUNTAIN PASSES AND THE OIL FIELDS. BUT THEY REMAIN ADAMANT IN THEIR REFUSAL TO MAKE A FORMAL DECLARATION OF NONBELLIGERANCY.

...

2. NYTIMES - GWERTZMAN - PAGE 3 - JERUSALEM - EXCERPTS

HAK CONFIRMED HE WOULD RETURN TO AREA EARLY NEXT MONTH. "WE'RE STILL IN BUSINESS" HAK TOLD REPORTERS ABOARD PLANE EN ROUTE SYRIA. BUT, HAK'S RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC COMMENTS IN PUBLIC HAVE BEEN TEMPERED BY EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN IN PRIVATE THAT HIS ENDEAVORS MIGHT FAIL. REPORTERS ON TRIP HAVE BEEN CAUTIONED THAT WHILE AN AGREEMENT WAS POSSIBLE, CHANCES WERE 50-50 AT BEST. HAK SOUGHT TO QUASH REPORTS IN ISRAELI JOURNALISTIC CIRCLES, SOME OF WHICH HAVE BEEN BROADCAST, THAT EGYPT

AND ISRAEL HAD AGREED ON 18-MO ACCORD. HAK HAS PUT EMPHASIS IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN POSITIVE ... THIS HAS BECOME FAVORITE TACTIC OF HAK ALONG WITH RELUCTANCE TO DIVULGE TO REPORTERS ANY DETAILS OF POSITIONS TO AVOID COMPROMISING HIS ROLE AS MEDIATOR ... CRUX OF PROBLEM SEEMS TO BE SADAT'S RELUCTANCE TO MAKE NONBELLIGERENCY DECLARATION TO ISRAEL THAT ISRAELI LEADERS INSIST THEY MUST HAVE ... AMERICAN OFFICIALS DO NOT BELIEVE SADAT COULD PUBLICLY DECLARE A NONBELLIGERENT ATTITUDE TOWARD ISRAEL AT THIS TIME ... SADAT MIGHT BE AGREEABLE TO ARRANGEMENTS WITH ISRAEL IN WHICH HE WOULD PLEDGE NOT TO BE FIRST TO START A WAR. THERE COULD ALSO BE PLEDGES TO U.S. OR SECRET ASSURANCES PASSED TO ISRAEL INVOLVING NONBELLIGERENCY. ...

3. WASHPOST - PAGE 23 - HEADLINE HAK CALLS SADAT TALKS QUOTE POSITIVE END QUOTE. JERUSALEM - BERGER: EXCERPTS:

HAK LAST NIGHT BRIEFED THE TOP ISRAELI LEADERS ABOUT HIS TALKS WITH SADAT WHICH HE CALLED "VERY POSITIVE," BUT WHICH THE SECRETARY SAID DID NOT RESULT IN "ANY CONCRETE PROPOSALS, PLANS OR LINES."

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IN AN UNUSUAL POST-MIDNIGHT MEETING WITH THE PRESS, HAK SOUGHT TO KNOCK DOWN REPORTS THAT A "MINI-AGREEMENT", A SMALL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IN EXCHANGE FOR SMALL EGYPTIAN CONCESSIONS HAD BEEN ACHIEVED...

HAK ... DISPLAYED GUARDED OPTIMISM. PRIVATELY, THE ATMOSPHERE WAS SOMEWHAT LESS BUOYANT, WITH THE WORD BEING PUT OUT BY AN OFFICIAL, WHO DELIBERATELY BY HABIT TENDS TO UNDERSTATE, THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR WRAPPING UP A DEAL DURING THE NEXT MONTH WERE NO MORE THAN 50-50.

SINCE BOTH THE MOOD AND CONTENT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS REMAIN SECRET IT IS IMPOSSIBLE NOW TO GAUGE THE LEVEL ON THE OPTIMISM-PESSIMISM INDEX WHICH IS NOW A FEATURE OF EVERY HAK DIPLOMATIC OPERATION.

REPORTERS WERE TOLD THAT THE TALKS ARE AT SUCH AN  
EARLY STAGE THAT IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO CLAIM A  
POSSIBILITY OF SUCCESS. "IT'S A CLOSE ONE," SAID  
ONE OFFICIAL ...

HAK IS TRYING TO RECONCILE ISRAEL'S REQUIREMENTS FOR A  
PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND SADAT'S NEED FOR A MORE  
TACIT ARRANGEMENT BECAUSE OF ARAB OPPOSITION.

EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS YESTERDAY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY WERE  
CONSIDERING AN AGREEMENT PROVIDED THERE WAS CONTINUED  
PROGRESS TOWARD ADDITIONAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS...  
THE CONTENTION ABOARD THE KISSINGER PLANE IS THAT THERE IS  
NOW A GREATER UNDERSTANDING ON BOTH SIDES OF THE  
DIRECTION IN WHICH AN AGREEMENT MAY LIE. THE NEXT  
NEGOTIATING STAGE IS BEING CHARACTERIZED AS THE MOST  
DIFFICULT YET BECAUSE IT CUTS CLOSE TO THE STRATEGIC  
INTERESTS OF BOTH SIDES.

THE CONTENTION ON KISSINGER'S PLANE IS THAT SADAT WANTS  
TO MOVE HIS COUNTRY IN THE DIRECTION OF A MODERATE,  
PEACEFUL EVOLUTION, WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT HE DOES NOT  
WISH TO INITIATE A NEW ROUND OF WAR, BUT THAT IF HE IS

PUSHED TOO FAR HIS ROLE AND INFLUENCE COULD BE UNDER-  
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MINED... END WASHPOST EXCERPTS.

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